

The Emancipation of Slaves in the British Empire

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— cOo —

THE EMANCIPATION OF SLAVES IN THE BRITISH EMPIRE

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Part I: The Abolition of the Slave Trade.

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EMANCIPATION OF SLAVES IN THE BRITISH EMPIRE.

Introduction.

It is my purpose to write the history of the emancipation of the slaves in the British Empire from about the time of the American Revolution until slavery was abolished in the British Colonies. I shall endeavor to trace the movement against it from its origin until the Act of Parliament for its abolition became effective. At the same time the attitude of the Colonies on the question and the effect of emancipation on them will be shown.

The movement against slavery took its rise in the last three decades of the eighteenth century. Before that time there was little if any emancipation save in individual cases, where slaves were liberated by the good-will of their masters. The great stimulus to the cause came in 1772, when Lord Mansfield gave his celebrated decision that a slave brought on English soil was free. (1) This decision led to agitation and organization against slavery. The first efforts were directed against the source of the evil, the slave trade, which was in itself a more horrible thing than the simple maintenance of slavery. The cruelties committed in carrying on this traffic are almost beyond description. The friends of the Negro Race reasoned that if they could suppress this traffic, they would at the same time render the condition of the slaves in the West Indies more tolerable, because as long as an unlimited supply of negroes could be obtained from Africa, it was cheaper to import them than to raise them. In consequence of this, those already in the West Indies were worked hard for a few years and then replaced by fresh arrivals, who could do more work. With the source of supply shut off, however, the price of slaves would rise so that it would be a matter of self-interest to treat them kindly and to provide for their physical

(1) Howell's State Trials 20:1-82.

comfort. This was the principle which the men who formed "The Society for the Abolition of the Slave Trade" had in mind. By confining their efforts against the slave trade, they diminished the amount of opposition and did not interfere with the property of the colonies, nor raise the constitutional question of the relation of the colonies to the Mother Country.

This Society was organized in London, under the presidency of Granville Sharpe, to raise funds and obtain information for the campaign, and also to influence the nation in favor of the cause. The man who was engaged to collect information was Thomas Clarkson, who had become interested in the question of the slave trade while a student at Cambridge and had won a prize essay on this subject. He proved a very zealous and efficient agent and obtained much valuable information to lay before the nation and before Parliament, so that it was not very long until such an interest had been aroused in the question that petitions began to pour into Parliament. In the Commons the leadership of the cause was taken by William Wilberforce, who became the great champion of the negroes. He was a bosom friend of Pitt, represented the largest constituency in England, and was gifted with wonderful eloquence. He was, moreover, well fitted for the humanitarian cause of which he made himself the leader, for he was endowed with unusual perseverance and never lost his courage or his temper. Among his supporters were such men as Pitt, Fox, and Burke. Arrayed against him was the slave interest in its various forms, which included not only those directly interested in the traffic but all those concerned in the prosperity of the West Indies, which were at that time the most valuable English colonial possession. Canada and Australia were as yet in their infancy and there was not at this time a demand for the great temperate products. Europe wanted what the West Indies supplied and what it could not cultivate--

the great products of sugar, coffee, and tobacco.

The fight on the question of this traffic in human flesh was waged vigorously by both sides. By 1792, the friends of the negro were strong enough to carry a bill through the Commons for the abolition of the slave trade in 1796. Unfortunately, for the success of the cause, the war with France broke out, which checked all reform movements in England. This was followed by an horrible insurrection in San Domingo, which resulted in the ruin of the most prosperous of the West Indian islands. This insurrection, which followed the abolition of the slave trade and slavery by France, was held out as a warning to the English people, who were cautioned against all doctrines of the Jacobins. The war, however, brought about vast changes in both the political and economic world. Many colonies fell into English hands. The ruin of the French West Indies led to great prosperity in the British Islands. In 1772 Jamaica had only exported 11,000 hogsheads of sugar. Her exports in the six years succeeding 1793 rose to 83,000 hogsheads, and 1801 and 1802 to 143,000 a year. (1) The other British islands also shared the advantage which had resulted from the ruin of the French islands.

But some of the English planters feared that at the restoration of peace the prosperity of the non-British islands would revive and for this reason they were not as much opposed to abolition in 1807 as in 1787. They seemed to feel that the prosperity of the old English islands was such that they could afford to sacrifice the slave trade rather than to see it revived in the recently conquered islands, which would in all probability be returned to the original owners at the end of the war. Another thing

(1) Spencer Walpole's Hist. of England 1:116.

which contributed much strength to the abolition cause in 1807 also was a result of the war. Ireland had been reunited to Great Britain and the Irish members given representation at Westminster. As Ireland had no share in the slave trade, the Irish members were strongly opposed to it and contributed as much as possible to its destruction. The change in ministry which took place on the death of Pitt, was also beneficial to the cause. Pitt had at all times supported Wilberforce but he never made the success of this cause one of the main objects of his policy. Fox, on the other hand, made this question one of prime importance and his supporters knew that he would sacrifice power rather than fail. The changes enumerated above made it possible to abolish the British slave trade in 1807.

From this time until the overthrow of Napoleon, the efforts of Wilberforce and his allies were attended with little success although attempts were made to secure universal abolition and the enforcement of the English abolition acts. Now that the British slave trade had been abolished, all Englishmen were ready for universal abolition. The restoration of peace gave an excellent opportunity to carry this desire into effect and by 1816 all the Powers had abolished the traffic except Spain and Portugal and these had agreed to limit the trade on the coast of Africa. With the restoration of peace, England gave up the control of the seas and the trade seems to have revived. The British colonies began to suffer from competition and were fast losing their prosperity. Efforts were made to check the clandestine trade into the British colonies by urging them to enact Slave Registry Laws and to suppress the illicit ocean trade by concerting a mutual limited right of search. In their efforts to secure these things,

the English statesmen experienced the greatest difficulty. In the first case the colonies were stubborn; in the second the Powers were jealous of British maritime superiority. Several treaties were secured but in 1823 the traffic was carried on as vigorously as ever before and the West Indies were losing their economic importance. Moreover, cases of great cruelty in the treatment of slaves were constantly reported so that it had become evident that the institution of slavery itself ought to be abolished. Since all efforts to check the slave trade had been unsuccessful, men were fast becoming convinced that the one and only way to effectually limit this inhuman traffic was by removing its demand, which could only be done by emancipation of the slaves already in the colonies. With these facts in mind the advocates of abolition became the champions of emancipation and formed the "Anti-Slavery Society" in 1823 on an "appeal" issued by Wilberforce.

The West Indies had been the most important colonial possession of Great Britain after the American Revolution. This position they lost during the first part of the nineteenth century. Their economic downfall was due to several things. Their prosperity rested on the basis of slavery. Numerous insurrections broke out destroying prosperity and faith in the established order of things. Moreover, hurricanes visited the islands causing great losses of life and property. The East Indies were rising in importance but chief of all the fertile lowland belt of the South had been brought into cultivation. The Southern States produced the products of the West Indies under more favorable conditions. The West India planters gave the conduct of their affairs over to over-seers, while the Southerner gave his affairs the closest personal supervision. To the above causes must be added the changing economic and commercial policy of the

Mother Country, which no longer favored the colonies to a great extent. Consequently, the British West Indies decreased in prosperity, the hardships of the negroes were increased and the way paved for emancipation. As the abolition of the horrible African slave trade was the first step in the emancipation of the negroes, I shall make the history of the movement against this inhuman traffic the first part of my thesis, and shall now proceed to investigate this subject more fully.

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THE ABOLITION OF THE SLAVE TRADE.

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THE ABOLITION OF THE SLAVE TRADE.

The First Period 1782--1792.

The history of the abolition of the slave trade naturally divides itself into two periods. Of these the first covers a period of about ten years from 1782 to 1792; the second begins at this time and ends with the abolition of the trade in 1807. Before the close of the Revolutionary War, the opposition to the traffic was insignificant. However, during the following ten years the movement in favor of abolition grew to such strength that a bill for the gradual abolition of the trade passed the House of Commons in 1792. Starting as an agitation among a few Quakers, it soon gained the support of the ablest minds in England. The failure of the cause in the last decade of the eighteenth century was due to the outbreak of the war with France, which entirely checked all reform movements in England. For this reason the champions of the cause came nearest success in 1792 before the outbreak of the war. This marks the turning point and the end of the first period, for after this time, they lost ground for about ten years.

The British slave trade had been greatly crippled by the American Revolution as the British cruisers very effectually prevented the importation of slaves into the revolted colonies. The cruisers of France and the Colonies in turn prevented the British trade to the West Indies. This fact is clearly shown in that the number of slavers clearing from English ports fell from 167 in 1774 to 28 in 1779, and the tonnage from 17,218 to 3,475 tons. (1) Moreover, the active and profitable commerce, which had long existed between the West Indies

(1) Report of the Privy Council, quoted in Dubois, Suppression of the Slave Trade.

and the American Colonies, like the slave trade, was interrupted by the war. Consequently, destitution, which lasted for many years, resulted and fell especially on the negro population. A committee of the Assembly of Jamaica expressed their firm conviction that in seven years, and in consequence of the prohibition of foreign supplies, not less than 15,000 negroes had perished. "This number," they said, "we firmly believe to have perished of famine, or of diseases contracted by scanty and unwholesome diet, between 1780 and 1787." (1)

It was, then, but natural that the scarcity produced by the suppression of the trade as a result of the war and by the heavy losses should lead to a rapid revival, as soon as peace was signed. This was indeed exactly what took place, and the renewed trade was accompanied with all the old horrors in an aggravated form. In fact, the revival was so rapid that by 1786 the trade had reached nearly its former extent. In 1783 the British West Indies received 16,208 negroes from Africa, and by 1787 the importation had increased to 21,023. In this latter year it was estimated that the British were taking annually from Africa 38,000 slaves; the French, 20,000; the Portuguese, 10,000; the Dutch and Danes, 6,000; a total of 74,000. Manchester alone sent £180,000 annually in goods to Africa in exchange for negroes. (2) Of the 814,000 negroes, who were carried from Africa to the West Indies during these ten years not less than 407,000 were carried in Liverpool ships and this city derived from the trade an annual profit of £298,462. (3) Before tracing the rise of the abolition movement let us take a glance at the number of slaves

(1) Bryan Edwards, History of the West Indies, Book VI, Ch. 4.

(2) Report of the Privy Council (London, 1789) quoted in DuBois, Suppression of the Slave Trade.

(3) Baine's History of Liverpool, p. 719, quoted in Lecky VI, 286.

in the Western Continent. It has been estimated that at the beginning of the nineteenth century, England held 800,000 slaves in her colonies; France, 250,000; Denmark, 27,000; Spain and Portugal, 600,000; Holland, 50,000; Sweden, 600; there were also about 2,000,000 slaves in Brazil and about 900,000 in the United States. This was the powerful basis of the demand for the slave trade; and against the economic forces which these four and a half million slaves represented, the battle for emancipation had to be fought. (1)

The battle waged in England is the most important not only because she had the largest share in the trade, but also because she had control of the sea and hence could carry her acts into effect. The trade as we have seen revived rapidly after the Peace of Paris. A small Quaker society had been formed for the purpose of influencing public opinion in favor of the abolition of the trade, which it did by disseminating tracts, and through the medium of the press. (2)

In 1783, when a bill for introducing some regulations into the trade was before Parliament, a Quaker petition for its abolition was presented by Sir Cecil Wray. (3) Lord North in a few words expressed his warm admiration of the Quaker body and his sympathy with the object of their petition, but declared that the trade had become in some measure necessary to every nation in Europe and that it would be next to an impossibility to induce them to give it up and renounce it forever. (4)

About the same time, the abolition cause received an immense stimulus when the master of a slave ship called the "Zong", finding sickness raging

(1) Cf. Augustin Cochin, in *Labor Cyclopedia*, III, p. 723.

(2) Clarkson *History of the Abolition of Slave Trade* I, pp. 115-116.

(3) *H. C. Jour.* 39:487. *Parl. Hist.* 23:1026. Clarkson, *Hist. of the Abolition of the Slave Trade* I, 119.

(4) *Parl. Hist.* 23:1026-1027. Clarkson, I, 119-120.

among his negroes, deliberately ordered 132 of them to be thrown into the sea. The pretext given was that the supply of water had become insufficient but this pretext was completely disproved. The real motive was a desire to save the owners, who would bear the cost if the negroes died of sickness, while if they were thrown overboard for the preservation of the ship, it would fall upon the underwriters. The trials brought out the fact that the case was legally of exactly the same kind as if it had been horses and not human beings that had been thrown into the sea. (1)

A second petition was presented to Parliament from the town of Bridgewater in 1785, (2) and nearly at the same time some of the most powerful champions of abolition appeared in the field. A clergyman named Ramsay, who had lived in the West Indies, published in 1784 a work on the treatment of the enslaved negroes which attracted much attention and gave rise to a long and heated controversy. In 1786 Clarkson began his lifelong labors in behalf of the negroes by the publication of his essay on negro slavery. (3) In 1787 Wilberforce agreed to bring the subject before Parliament and in the same year the "Society for the Abolition of the Slave Trade" was formed in London under the presidency of Granville Sharp. (4)

As a result of the work of this society, early in 1788 a large number of petitions against the slave trade began to be presented to Parliament and before the end of the session, 103 had been laid on the table. (5) The petitions were sent from nearly all parts of England and Scotland

(1) Clarkson I, 95-97.

(2) H. C. Journal, 40:918.

(3) An Essay on the Slavery and Commerce of the Human Species. This essay was published in Latin as a Cambridge prize essay the year before.

(4) Clarkson I, pp. 255-58.

(5) H. C. Journal 43.

except from those cities which were directly interested in the maintenance of the trade, such as Liverpool, Bristol, Manchester, Glasgow, and London. (1) London, however, was much divided in its sentiments. The Chamber of Commerce of Dublin sent a petition, expressing its satisfaction that Ireland had been unpolluted by the traffic, and promising that if it were abolished in England, they would do the utmost in their power to prevent it from finding any asylum in the ports of Ireland. (2) These petitions generally represented the slave trade as unjust, contrary to true policy, the honor of the nation, and the interests of humanity. However, little was done in this session of Parliament in respect to the object of the petitioners. Wilberforce early in the session gave notice of his intention to bring forward a proposition but due to his illness Pitt moved a resolution, "That the House will early in the next session proceed to take into consideration the circumstances of the slave trade." (3) Pitt stated that, as a result of the numerous petitions, the Privy Council had instituted an inquiry and that he would not give an opinion until the moment of discussion had arrived. (4) Fox, however, declared himself in favor of abolition and regretted that the House had not instituted an inquiry instead of leaving this to the Privy Council, which had not received the petitions. Burke spoke to much the same effect. Mr. Gascoyne and Lord Penrhyn, representative of the slave interests, wished an inquiry to clear the character of their constituents of false accusations of cruelty. (5)

By the time of the next session, the friends of the trade had been thoroughly aroused and sent many petitions to Parliament. (6) Their

- (1) H. C. Jour. 44. (2) Macpherson's Annals of Commerce, IV, 141, 154. Clarkson I, 491-496. May, Constitutional History I, 447-448.
 (3) Parl. Hist. 27:495.
 (4) Parl. Hist. 27:495-506.
 (5) Parl. Hist. 27:495-506.
 (6) H. C. Jour. 44.

representatives in Parliament used every means to secure delay and it was not till May 12, 1789, that Wilberforce was enabled to introduce his resolutions. All the evidence, including all the petitions and the Report of the Privy Council, was placed before the committee of the whole house. Wilberforce, in a very able speech, gave a complete and clear outline of the policy he intended to follow, set forth all the horrors of the traffic and answered all the arguments which had been made or were likely to be made by his opponents. (1) The friends of the slave trade (2) in their many petitions argued that it was necessary to the further improvement of the West Indies upon which the security of Britain, the strength of its navy, and the permanence of its manufactures so greatly depended. They maintained the agriculture could not be carried on there without slaves, that it had been guaranteed and even encouraged by a large number of Acts of Parliament on the good faith of which many men had invested their fortunes in the islands. (3) Even if Great Britain abolished the trade it would be vigorously carried on by her rivals, who eagerly sought it. The trade instead of being abolished should receive the encouragement of Parliament in the face of fierce foreign competition. The propositions were unjust because they would take away private property without compensation. (4)

Wilberforce, who in the main, based his arguments on the Report of the Privy Council, defended his position on moral grounds; and even if it

(1) Parl. Hist. 27:1012ff.

(2) H. C. Jour. 44:351-380.

(3) Encouraged by Charters granted in 1662 and 1672 to the African Company and by Statutes 15, Car. II, C. 7., 22 and 23 Car. II, C. 26., 7 and 8 Will III, C. 22, 9 and 10 Will III., C. 23, C. 26, 3 and 4 Anne, C. 30, 6 Geo. II, C. 13, 12 Geo. II, C. 30, 5 Geo. III, C. 44, 23 Geo. III, C. 65, 27 Geo. III, C. 27, to promote and secure loans. 5 Geo. II, C. 7, 13 Geo. III, C. 14, 14 Geo. III, C. 79.

(4) H. C. Jour. 44:350-380.

were shown that the abolition of the trade would lead to more or less economic disaster, he would urge it nevertheless. The trade was detrimental to Africa as a whole. The horrors of the "middle passage" were beyond comprehension; twelve and one-half per cent perished in the passage, four and one-half per cent died on shore before the day of sail, and one-third more died during the seasoning. (1) Abolition would not be ruinous to the islands for with better care the natural increase of the negroes would be sufficient to supply the demands of labor and civilization would begin. (2) The ships and capital engaged in the trade could find other employment. Instead of being the nursery of seamen, it was their grave, as more sailors died in this trade in one year than in all other trades in two years. Abolition of the traffic would probably not be opposed by foreign nations, who it was feared would take it up, but they were likely to join in its suppression. In France the sentiment against it was strong; the king was favorable and Neckar had already pledged himself. (3) The trade was of such a nature that abolition and not regulation was the only remedy. Pitt and Fox supported Wilberforce and believed that foreign nations might be secured in cooperation, and that Great Britain was powerful enough to protect her islands from illicit trade. (4)

During the next few months the cause apparently lost ground. The examinations in the House of Commons proceeded very slowly and a select committee was chosen to conduct examinations and secure additional evidence.(5) Beyond this little was done in 1790. In 1791, Wilberforce brought forward the

(1) Parl. Hist. 28:41 ff. Clarkson II, 52.

(2) See Macpherson, Annals of Commerce IV, p. 150.

(3) Lecky VI:292.

(4) Parl. Hist. 28:41-71.

(5) Parl. Hist. 28:311.

question in the form of a general motion and defended his position in an able speech, in which his statements are more specific than in his former addresses. He brought out the fact that in several islands the natural increase of the negro population was already sufficient to keep up the slave population. (1) James Martin in support of Wilberforce quoted from the petition of the University of Cambridge that "a firm belief in the providence of a benevolent Creator, assured them that no system founded on the oppression of one part of mankind could be beneficial to another." (2) Hastings stood accused of cruelty but here was an even greater cruelty than any Hastings could have been guilty of. Pitt, in a long speech, directed his efforts to prove that the population of the West Indies could be maintained without importation, using Jamaica as an example. (3) Fox compared the argument that if England withdrew from the trade, other nations would take it up to that of a robber, who robs to keep others from robbing as others will rob anyway and perhaps more cruelly. (4) A revolution had already broken out in San Domingo and was marked by horrible reprisals of the Blacks against the Whites. This war had much to do with a change in the abolition sentiment. The abolitionists held that the condition in San Domingo was one of the best arguments against new importations of unruly Blacks, while their opponents maintained that the destruction of the trade would lead to revolt as the negroes would feel that they had no chance of being relieved of their heavy burdens by new arrivals. After two days' debate, the measure was lost by a vote of 163 to 88. (5) Here as in most cases during

(1) Parl. Hist. 29:250-262.

(2) Parl. Hist. 29:281 ff.

(3) Parl. Hist. 29:335 ff.

(4) Parl. Hist. 29:334 ff.

(5) Parl. Hist. 29:359. Clarkson, II, 212-213.

the agitation of this question in Parliament, the eloquent speeches were on one side of the question but the majority of the votes on the other.

A similar motion was brought in by Wilberforce April 2, 1792. There was no longer any direct opposition except from the members of Liverpool and Bristol, who defended the slave trade at all times. In this year 519 petitions were presented and the question was debated for a whole night with practically no new arguments on either side. (1) Both Mr. Jenkinson and Mr. Dundas acknowledged the slave trade to be indefensible. Jenkinson proposed to render it unnecessary by ameliorating the lot of the slaves in the Colonies, but his resolution was lost. But greater favor was shown the more moderate motion of Dundas that the word "gradually" should be inserted. However, the Prime Minister and Mr. Fox stood up warmly for the original words; and the speech of Pitt on this occasion is regarded as one of the very ablest he ever made. (2) He pictured to his enraptured audience the civilization and glory of Africa, when, in coming years, delivered from the curse of the slave trade, she should take her place among the nations. But all was in vain. Dividing at near seven o'clock in the morning, the House adopted the "gradually" of Mr. Dundas by a vote of 193 to 125. (3) The resolution was sent to the Lords who on May 8th voted down a motion for a select committee to take evidence by a vote of 63 to 36, thus deciding in favor of the less effective way of taking evidence before the Committee of the whole House. (4) In the Commons, Dundas very reluctantly brought in a set of resolutions to carry out his ideas of the meaning of "gradually." The fight centered on the time of abolition of the trade,

(1) Parl. Hist. 29:1055-1158.

(2) Parl. Hist. 29:1133-1158. See Stanhope, Life of Pitt, II, 145, 146.

(3) Parl. Hist. 29:1158.

(4) Parl. Hist. 29:1135. Lords Journals 39:404.

which he had fixed at Jan. 1, 1800. An amendment changing the time to Jan. 1, 1793, was lost by vote of 158 to 109. The same fate awaited a motion to abolish it on Jan. 1, 1795, by a vote of 161 to 121. However, the motion for abolishing the trade on Jan. 1, 1796, was passed by a vote of 151 to 132 on April 27th. (1)

The house of Commons, then, in 1792, voted to abolish the slave trade on Jan. 1, 1796. The trade was no longer defended by a majority, the difference of opinion being on the time of abolition. However, abolition of the slave trade was far from being an accomplished fact. The reason for this due, not only to the strength and exertions of the West India planters, but also to two other causes. First, the warning, as was supposed, held out by the recent bloody scenes in San Domingo; and second, the strong objections, now coming to be generally known, of the King. (2)

The friends of the abolition of the inhuman traffic dwelt most strongly on the justice of their cause and were in favor of abolition regardless of some temporary disarrangements. The opponents defended the trade as necessary to the economic welfare of the West Indies and of the Empire. A common meeting ground was reached largely through the efforts of Pitt, who endeavored to bridge the gap separating the contestants by showing that the abolition of the trade would not be followed with the disasters which its opponents predicted, as the negro population of the islands would increase fast enough to supply the demands of labor. (3) The year 1792, then, marks the end of the first epoch in the history of the abolition of the slave trade. The beginning of hostilities with France checked all reform move-

(1) Parl. Hist. 29:1213, 1236, 1273, 1293, 1292.

(2) Lecky, England in the Eighteenth Century VI, 284.

(3) Parl. Hist. 29:1133, 1158.

ments, for the nation was face to face with a foe, who demanded all of its attention. Interest in the horrors of the "middle passage" naturally sank when armed Frenchmen were gazing toward England from the other side of the English Channel.

THE ABOLITION OF THE SLAVE TRADE.

Second Period 1793-1807.

It is, perhaps, well to notice that during the second period of the abolition movement, which dates from 1792 to 1806, when the slave trade was abolished, there was but little change in either the methods of the opponents or the friends of the Cause. Few new arguments were advanced on either side, but the almost uninterrupted war produced vast economic changes not only in Europe but throughout the world. The maritime position of Great Britain became predominant; British ships carried most of the commerce of the world; and British goods supplied the wants of Europe in a large measure. Commercial changes of such vast importance could not but effect the slave trade for at the end of the period the colonial empire was largely in English hands. But along with these great changes in the commercial and colonial world came a political change in the relations between Great Britain and Ireland. The war not only accelerated the economic development of the British Empire but it necessitated the Act of Union. (1) Ireland which had been semi-dependent for almost twenty years was reunited to Great Britain in 1800 and given representation at Westminster thus strengthening the friends of abolition as the Irish members were opposed to the slave trade.

Wilberforce renewed the attack in 1793 by moving that the House resolve itself into a Committee. This was vigorously opposed and by a vote of 61 to 53 the question was postponed for six months (2) so that nothing was done during that year.

(1) Statutes, 39 and 40, Geo. III, C. 67.

(2) Parl. Hist. 50:514.

However, in 1794, he renewed his attack but confined his motion for leave to bring in a bill for the prevention of any supply by British vessels to any foreign territories. Pitt said, "the House having determined that the trade should be abolished, but having postponed the period of abolition till 1796, a motion was now made to abolish immediately that part of the trade which did not respect our West Indies, but which applied to foreign islands only. Since this trade had actually ceased of itself on account of the war, the motion was but to prevent its revival." (1) A bill passed the Commons for a second reading by a vote of 56 to 38. However, when sent to the Lords, Grenville refused to defend it and it was defeated by vote of 45 to 4. (2)

In 1795, Wilberforce brought the subject before the Commons by reviewing the history of the movement and called on the House to fulfill its pledges made in 1792. He admitted that the West Indies were in a dangerous state but ascribed this to the fact that 100,000 negroes had been imported since 1792, thus greatly increasing the inequality between the Whites and Blacks. (3) An attack was made on the Lords, who in three years had only devoted fourteen days (4) to the examination of this most important subject. Fox and Pitt warmly supported Wilberforce's motion. Pitt denied "that the propositions to abolish the slave trade had arisen from fanaticism, or were connected with French principles. Enthusiasm was apt to mingle in the most meritorious exertions, and to push those by whom it was felt too far, even in a good cause. But with what propriety could they brand with the

(1) Parl. Hist. 30:1443.

(2) Parl. Hist. 31:469, 470.

(3) Parl. Hist. 31:1323 ff.

(4) Parl. Hist. 31:1331, 1332.

epithet of fanaticism, the opposition to a trade which was hostile to the principles of religion, to the maxims of justice, and the feelings of humanity? But opposition to the slave trade was said to be connected with the support of Jacobin principles. The charge, he believed, was found in the circumstances of the French having declared themselves, at an early period of their revolution, enemies to all slavery, though they had continued to introduce something so exceedingly like it into their own government. But it was not less incumbent upon a British legislature to show, by its conduct, the contrast between the wild, spurious, and imaginary tenets of the 'Rights of Man,' and the genuine principles of practical justice and rational liberty. It was incumbent upon the House to take the speediest measures to heal the wounds which humanity has suffered from the prosecution of the slave trade, and thereby to disarm the Jacobins of their most dangerous engine of attack, and provide for the country the surest and most effectual means of safety." (1) The debate was adjourned for six months by a vote of 78 to 61. (2)

The fight in 1796 was long and bitter. Leave was given to bring in a bill by a vote of 93 to 67 and the House of Lords was mentioned for its inaction. But the able speeches of the opponents of the trade were unavailing as the bill was lost by a vote of 74 to 70. (3)

In 1797, the House addressed the Crown humbly requesting His Majesty to send instructions to the governors of the West Indies, directing them to concert such measures with the different legislative assemblies so that by promoting the population of the islands they might gradually render the

(1) Parl. Hist. 31:1340 ff.

(2) Parl. Hist. 31:1345.

(3) Parl. Hist. 32:901.

slave trade less necessary, and finally lead to its total abolition. (1) Wilberforce, however, was refused permission to bring in a bill, though he now had a new recruit in Canning. (2)

The same story was repeated during the following two years showing that in 1799 the abolition cause had sunk to its lowest ebb. That year Wilberforce's motion was defeated by a vote of 84 to 54. (3) As the agitation was doing no good at home and was, perhaps, increasing the ferment in the West Indies, Wilberforce decided to postpone the question till some more favorable time.

Several acts, however, were passed chiefly by Wilberforce's opponents for regulating the conditions both of the slave trade and of slavery, with a view of depriving them of some of their worst characteristics. (4) The parliamentary address mentioned above was one of these measures. An act of George II, which authorized the sale of slaves at the suit of their master's creditors, was repealed, and an act was passed securing a greater height between the decks of slave ships and giving bounties to masters and surgeons. (5) But the predominant feeling of the time was that the darkest period of a war was no time to abolish a lucrative trade, at the risk of irritating the Colonies. True, the majorities against Wilberforce were not large but the numbers in the divisions were very small showing that the great majority of the members of Parliament were absolutely uninterested in the question.

However, a more favorable time was near at hand. England was winning victories on the ocean while France was almost uniformly successful on

(1) H. C. Jour. 52:461.

(2) Parl. Hist. 33:569-576.

(3) Parl. Hist. 34:518 ff.

(4) Statute 28 George III, C. 54. Cf. Statute 29, George III, C. 66.

(5) Statute 28 George III, C. 54. Statute 29, George III, C. 66.

the land, so that conditions in the West Indies were changing. Moreover, the abolition question was quite decidedly affected by the Act of Union in 1800. The Irish members had no interest in the slave trade and were on principle opposed to it. (1) Their addition, then, to the opposition forces did much to encourage Wilberforce. Peace, too, was about to be signed (2) and as the friends of the trade had always insisted that the trade should be abolished in times of peace, it was now to be hoped that they would join the opponents of the trade. But unfortunately for the cause, with the return of peace, there came a change in the ministry. Pitt resigned because of a disagreement with the king on the Catholic question. Addington became prime minister and reflected the opinions and prejudices of the king so that nothing was done during the short interval of peace. (3) When Pitt returned to power the war had been renewed and he was in declining health. (4)

A change was taking place in the attitude of the West Indian merchants and planters so that on Pitt's return to office, it was found that some of them had begun to talk of abolition. (5) They were afraid of the cultivation of sugar in Dutch West Indies. Pitt warmly supported a bill for the abolition of the trade within a time to be limited. But the opposition in the Commons was such that it did not pass till June, too late for the Lords to act on it that session. (6) In the meantime, Wilberforce had secured a promise of an Order in Council to prohibit the traffic in the Colonies conquered from the Dutch. However, there was so much delay in the execution of the Order that it did not appear till September, 1805. (7)

(1) Macpherson's, *Annals of Commerce* IV, 141, 154.

(2) Peace of Amiens was concluded March 27, 1802.

(3) Stanhope's *Life of Pitt*, IV:202.

(4) Pitt was out of office from February, 1801, till April, 1804.

(5) *Parl. Debates* II, 461-463.

(6) *Parl. Deb.* II, 871. Vote of 69 to 31 on 3rd reading. Stanhope IV, 204.

(7) Lecky V, 66. Stanhope IV, 205.

It is quite evident from the passage of a bill by the Commons in 1804, that the abolitionist sentiment was growing and it seems very probable that had Pitt lived he would have carried out the policy adopted by Fox.

On Pitt's death, Fox became prime minister. He at once made the abolition of the slave trade one of the main objects of his administration. In spite of the able efforts of Pitt in Parliament the trade had greatly revived and increased. Wilberforce declared in 1802 that it had been carried, especially of late years, to a greater extent than at any former period. It is computed that under the administration of Pitt, the number of negroes carried annually in English ships increased from 25,000 to 57,000. (1) Pitt has been severely blamed for this increase but for the most unjustly. He supported every motion of Wilberforce ably. True, some of his colleagues (2) were against him and he might have insisted on their support or resignation, but the chances are that this would have improved in no way the chances of the abolitionists even in the House of Commons. For even if successful there, a bill would have been destroyed in the Lords.

Fox on assuming office was surrounded with many of the obstacles which had baffled Pitt. But a change of sentiment had taken place, which coupled with his earnestness in the cause made victory possible. His friends knew that he would risk and sacrifice power, rather than not carry abolition. All the powers of Orders in Council were exercised at once and Fox himself moved a resolution, which was carried through both Houses pledging Parliament to proceed with all practicable expedition to the total abolition of the slave trade, and an address was presented to the King requesting him to negotiate with foreign powers for the purpose of obtaining the total abolition

(1) See Edinburgh Review, July 1808, April 1814. The former article was written by Coleridge.

(2) They were Thurlow, Dundas, Jenkinson, and Addington.

of the slave trade. In his speech on the resolution, he made the oft quoted declaration, which is perhaps his most fitting epitaph, "So fully am I impressed with the vast importance and necessity of attaining what will be the object of my motion this night, that if during the almost forty years that I have had the honor of a seat in Parliament, I have been so fortunate as to accomplish that and that only, I should think I had done enough and could retire from public life with comfort and the conscious satisfaction that I had done my duty." (1)

The session ended by the passing of a bill which provided against the sudden increase of the trade before abolition could take place, by prohibiting vessels which had not been engaged in the trade taking part in it. (2)

Mr. Fox died in October before the opening of the new session. The abolition cause was now taken up by Lord Grenville in the House of Lords. The enthusiasm in favor of the abolition of this inhuman traffic was so marked that even the Lords were decisively affected by it. Grenville spoke in favor of the motion as ardently as his friend Fox could well have done. At five in the morning of the 6th of February, the decisive vote was taken, when the Bill was supported by a majority of 100 to 36. (3) This was a large vote in the Lords. Lord St. Vincent, who held with his lost friend, Nelson, that the abolition of the slave trade was a "damned and cursed doctrine," held only by hypocrites, entered his solemn and final protest against this measure of national ruin, and walked out of the House. (4)

In the Commons, the young noblemen were as eager to speak on the side of

(1) Parl. Deb. VII, 580.

(2) Statutes 46, George III, C. 52.

(3) Parl. Deb. 8:672. Lords' Journals 46:55.

(4) Parl. Deb. 8:693.

"justice and humanity" as any representatives of the planters to plead against the insertion of those words in the preamble of the Bill. The decisive vote was taken on the 23rd of February, when the House seems to have been wrought up to the highest pitch of excitement. The concluding words of Solicitor-General Romilly caused the members to burst into loud acclamation. "When he looked to the man at the head of the French monarchy," he said, "surrounded as he was with all the pomp of power, and all the pride of victory, distributing kingdoms to his family and principalities to his followers, seeming, when he sat upon his throne, to have reached the summit of human ambition and the pinnacle of earthly happiness, and when he followed that man into his closet or to his bed, and considered the pangs with which his solitude must be tortured, and his repose banished, by the recollection of the blood he had spilled, and the oppressions he had committed; and when he compared with those pangs of remorse, the feelings which must accompany his honorable friend (Mr. Wilberforce) from that House to his home, after the vote of that night should have confirmed the object of his humane and unceasing labours; when he should retire into the bosom of his happy and delighted family, when he should lay himself down on his bed, reflecting on the innumerable voices that would be raised in every quarter of the world to bless him; how much more pure and permanent felicity must he enjoy, in the consciousness of having preserved so many millions of his fellow-creatures, than the man with whom he had compared him, on the throne to which he had waded through slaughter and oppression!" (1) The vote was 283 to 16, giving an overwhelming majority to the opponents of the slave trade. (2)

Several comrades went home with Wilberforce after the House had ad-

(1) Parl. Deb. 8:978-79.

(2) Parl. Deb. 8:995. H. C. Jour. 62:161.

journed. "Well, Henry," he said to his friend Thornton, "what shall we abolish next?" "The lottery, I think," was the answer. William Smith said, "Let us make out the names of these sixteen miscreants. I have four of them." "Never mind," said Wilberforce, who was kneeling on one knee at the table, writing a note, and looking up as he spoke. "Never mind the miserable sixteen; let us think of our glorious 283." Lord Grenville, the next day, wrote to Wilberforce on hearing of the decisive vote, "I really feel quite overpowered with the thoughts of this success." (1) After the final passing of the bill in the Lords, he congratulated the House on having now performed one of the most glorious acts that had ever been done by any assembly of any nation in the world." (2)

The bill enacted, that no vessel should clear out for slaves after the first of May, 1807, and that no slave should be landed in the Colonies after the first of March, 1808. This bill received the royal assent and became law on March 25th, the same day the ministry was dissolved. (3)

Thus after a period of twenty years of agitation in the country and in Parliament, the abolition of the slave trade had become an accomplished fact. Through all these years, a few men had labored manfully to secure this end, only to find victory farther and farther away. At first the interest was intense so that in 1792, 519 petitions (4) were presented to Parliament and the attendance on the debates was reasonably large. But during the next ten years, interest in the question was at a low ebb as shown by small divisions on the question. However, the naval victories of

(1) Harriet Martineau, Hist. of England 1800-15, p 234.

(2) Parl. Deb. 9:170.

(3) Statute, 47 Geo. III. Sess. I, C. 36. H. C. Jour. 62:290.

(4) H. C. Jour. Vol. 47.

England, which threw the commerce of the world largely into the hands of her merchants, combined with the changing attitude of the West Indian planters, (1) enabled the friends of abolition to secure an act of Parliament making it illegal. Having denied themselves of the trade, the English statesman tried to secure its universal abolition. The trade, which had desolated Africa and carried millions into slavery, which had founded and supported slavery was abolished. The first step of emancipation of the slaves was taken.

(1) Parl. Deb. II, 556.

THE ABOLITION OF THE SLAVE TRADE.

Third Period 1807-1816.

The time from 1807 to 1816 might be called the third period in the history of emancipation. During this time, Europe was engaged in almost continuous wars and the second Peace of Paris, November, 1815, marks the end of these wars and the beginning of a long period of Peace. As the English had abolished their own slave trade, they were anxious to secure its universal abolition partly for humanitarian and partly for commercial reasons. However, as the energies of all the European nations were absorbed in the great conflict but little progress was made toward the solution of this problem until the prospect of peace appeared. Consequently, there was but little agitation in England on this question before 1814. But there was another reason for this calm; the people of England thought they had secured a great deal in the abolition of their own trade and it was but natural that a time of rest should follow the exertions of twenty years. Time alone could show what the effects of abolition would be not only on the prosperity of the country but on the condition of the slaves; and it was only when the abolitionists found that the trade was still being carried on to a great extent that they became aroused again.

The question, in fact, had been removed from Parliament to the King's Ministers and hence had become a diplomatic question. Instead of being a national question it had become an international question subject to the good humour of the European Courts. Pressure, when it was brought to bear on Parliament, was transferred to the Ministers by means of addresses to induce them to put forth their best efforts. Nor were the Ministers dead to the importance of the question but they made efforts to secure universal

abolition at all times, as they were well aware that the question was constantly in the minds of the English people waiting for an opportunity to burst forth. There were some, however, who had little faith in the hopes of the abolitionists in regard to the good effects of suppression of this traffic by Act of Parliament. A representative of this class was Lord Sidmouth, who had fought the abolition of the trade to the very end on the ground that abolition was not abolition. His view was that, while much might be done for humanity, by regulation, on the coast of Africa, in the "middle passage," and in the West Indies, it was rash beyond measure to prohibit the trade altogether; as the smuggling which must ensue would occasion more misery to the negroes than their race was undergoing at the time. (1) A number of years later the correctness of this view became apparent. By that time, as we shall see, it had become known that the slave trade had increased and that the miseries of the negroes had been fearfully aggravated. But at the time of abolition of the trade by Act of Parliament, it could not be known that the effect would be detrimental to the negroes. Few, if any, at the time seem to have realized that the one and only way to secure the abolition of the slave trade was to secure the abolition of slavery itself thus taking away the incentive for carrying it on. For while negro slavery existed, negroes were bound to be obtained; and the more the traffic was interfered with by law, the greater the sufferings of the negroes would be. However, these facts forced themselves into men's minds very gradually.

In the year 1807, not only was the abolition of the slave trade secured but a motion was made for leave to bring in a bill for the gradual emancipation of slaves in the British colonies in the West Indies. This

(1) Parl. Deb. 2:471, 870. 7:234, 808, 1144.

motion, however, was dropped as less than forty members were present, a number insufficient for the consideration of any question. (1) Wilberforce was opposed to this motion and declared that this measure at that time would be injurious to the slaves and ruinous to the Colonies. He and his friends were satisfied with what had been gained and the sole point they had in view was, the abolition of the slave trade and not the emancipation of the slaves. These two objects had always been confounded by the enemies of abolition, whereas its friends had always distinguished them. (2) After this time, there was little parliamentary activity for several years. But in 1810, when papers concerning the slave trade were presented to the House of Commons, an address was voted thanking His Majesty for the efforts made to secure the relinquishment of the trade by foreign nations, and asking him to persevere in the cause, in which his noble efforts had thus far not been successful. The House was surprised and indignant to find that certain persons in the country had continued an illicit trade and asked that the officers of the navy and the customs be ordered to check this contemptuous practice. A resolution was passed declaring that the House would early in the next session take into consideration such measures as would tend effectively to prevent such daring violations of the law. (3) In accordance with this resolution in the next session a bill was passed making a violation of the abolition act a felony subject to fourteen years deportation. (4)

During the year 1812, no mention seems to have been made of the slave trade in Parliament but in 1813 an act was passed enlarging the time for commencing prosecutions for forfeitures under certain acts relating to the

(1) H. C. Jour. 62:250.

(2) Parl. Deb. 9:143, 144.

(3) H. C. Jour. 65:503.

(4) Statutes, 51 Geo. III, C. 23.

abolition of the slave trade to three years after the offense was committed.(1) It was not till the year 1814 when great interest was aroused in this question on account of the approaching peace of Europe but more especially because the provision in the treaty of peace with France in regard to the slave trade was held by the abolitionists to be very unsatisfactory. (2) However, before taking up the excitement in the country and the petitions to Parliament it might be well to trace the efforts made by the King's Ministers in this cause. Here rather than in Parliament was the chief activity against the slave trade from 1807 to 1816.

Denmark was the first country to respond to the cries of the eighteenth century against slavery and the slave trade. In 1792, by royal order, this traffic was prohibited in the Danish possessions after 1802. The principles of the French Revolution logically called for the extinction of the slave system by France. This was, however, accomplished more precipitately than the Convention had expected due to the enthusiasm aroused by the appearance of the Dominican deputies. (3) Slavery and the slave trade were abolished in all French colonies Feb. 4, 1794. The conditions in the great French West India island were such that emancipation was decreed by the French commissioners as a matter of military necessity six months before the decree of the Convention. (4) In the treaty proposed between the United States and Great Britain in 1806 article 24 provided that "The high contracting parties

(1) 53 Geo. III, C. 112.

(2) For treaty of peace see Parl. Deb. 28:198.

(3) H. Morse Stephens: The French Revolution II, 470.

(4) H. Morse Stephens: The French Revolution II, 470, 471. This was done in order to secure the aid of the slaves in repulsing the English, who had attacked the island. The French Convention gave but little thought to the vast economic consequences of their act.

engage to communicate to each other, without delay, all such laws as have been or shall be hereafter enacted by their respective Legislatures, as also all measures which shall have been taken for the abolition or limitation of the African slave trade; and they further agree to use their best endeavors to procure the cooperation of other Powers for the final and complete abolition of a trade so repugnant to the principles of justice and humanity." (1) This marks the beginning of a long series of treaties between England and other powers looking toward the prohibition of the traffic by international agreement. During the years 1810-14 she signed treaties relating to the subject with Portugal, Denmark, and Sweden. (2) May 30, 1814 an additional article to the Treaty of Paris, engaged these powers to endeavor to induce the approaching Congress of Vienna "to decree the abolition of the slave trade, so that the said trade shall cease universally, as it shall cease definitively, under any circumstances, on the part of the French Government, in the course of five years; and that during the said period no slave merchant shall import or sell slaves, except in the Colonies of the State of which he is a subject." (3) In addition to this, the next day a circular letter was despatched by Castlereagh to Austria, Russia, and Prussia, expressing the hope, "that the Powers of Europe, when restoring the Peace to Europe, with one common interest, will crown this great work by interposing their benign offices in favor of those Regions of the Globe, which yet continue to be desolated by this unnatural and inhuman traffic." (4) Austria, Russia, and Prussia sent favorable replies. (5) In the meantime an

(1) Amer. State Papers 1807-8, Vol. 6:365. Pub. By Thomas B. Wait, Boston, 1819.

(2) Brit. & For. State Papers, 1815-16, pp. 886, 937. Quoted in DuBois, *Suppression of the Slave Trade*.

(3) Parl. Deb. 28:198. Wellington, Sup. Desp. IX, 130.

(4) Brit. & For. State Papers 1815-16, pp. 890-1. Quoted in DuBois, *Suppression of the Slave Trade*, p. 134.

(5) Parl. Deb. 28:283.

additional treaty was secured; in 1814 by royal decree the Netherlands agreed to abolish the trade thus bringing this colonial power in line with Great Britain. (1)

As already stated, it was the first additional article of the treaty with France May 30, 1814, which caused such great excitement in England. This excitement was the more intense because on May 3rd, the Commons had voted an address stating that they relied with perfect confidence on the assurances received by Parliament in 1806 and 1810, that His Majesty's Government would employ every proper means to obtain a convention of the Powers of Europe for the immediate and universal abolition of the African slave trade. They called attention to the happy and glorious events which promised the general pacification of Christendom, and the present Union and Assembly of its greatest Sovereigns as affording an excellent opportunity of accomplishing the object so dear to the Parliament and the people of Great Britain and Ireland. They dwelt on the duty they owed to Europe on account of their own abolition of this trade, of the guilty profits of which they had enjoyed the largest share, and their high rank among the maritime and Colonial States, to bring about a general abolition, as the practical result of the restoration of Peace would be to revive the traffic which they had prohibited as a crime. The nations of Europe whose independence had been saved by their efforts could not but listen with respect to their voice raised in the cause of justice and humanity. Among the great nations till of late their enemies, maritime hostility had abolished the trade, so that there was no financial interest involved in it. Consequently, legal permission to carry it on would practically be a new establishment of it with all its horrors. (2)

(1) H. C. Jour. 69:847,848.

(2) H. C. Jour. 69:231.

This address embodied the hopes and expectations of the people of England on the slave trade as an international problem. They were, therefore, deeply disappointed when they learned of the contents of the additional article of the Treaty of Paris and as a result petitions against it began to pour into Parliament. On June 27th, twenty-five (1) were received of which the one from London was typical. The petitions regretted that no provision had been made for the immediate abolition of the trade, and that consequently it would revive to an unlimited extent in five years, at the end of which time there would be powerful financial interests to fight against its suppression. Moreover, great and populous Colonies, in which during the last seven years there had been practically no slave trade, were turned over to France without any stipulation for the continuance of that prohibition but with the declared purpose of renewing the trade. (2) The forts and factories of the African coast were likewise given over to the renewal of slave hunting. The recognition of the injustice of the trade on the part of France should have led to an immediate abolition. (3) The same day a second address respecting this inhuman traffic was voted in which satisfaction was expressed on account of the immediate and unqualified abolition of the slave trade by Holland and Sweden. (4) But it was hoped that further advances toward abolition or limitation might be obtained at the approaching Congress, and that France would agree to the reduction of the term of five years. Finally, no exertion was to be omitted at the Congress of Vienna to secure the final abolition at the very most at a period not beyond five

(1) H. C. Jour. 69:387, 88.

(2) Liverpool had foreseen the difficulty on first additional article. In a letter to Castlereagh, 5/19/814, he pressed for abolition as easier then than later. Wilberforce and Clarkson had written Castlereagh that French and English expected abolition in return for colonies.

(3) H. C. Jour. 69:387, 388.

(4) H. C. Jour. 69. Appendix No. 13 gives decree June 15, 1814 by the Prince of Orange.

years. (1)

Wilberforce who moved the resolutions which were embodied in the address of the Commons expressed his sorrow that the additional article had not been submitted to the House of Commons before ratification. He maintained that abolition should have been made a condition of the restoration of the colonies under which circumstances France could not have refused. (2) The view of the government was given by Castlereagh, who had negotiated the treaty. He said that he was well aware that the nation was willing to make great sacrifices for the cause, but that such was not the impression in France, and that even among the better classes of people there the British government did not get full credit for its motives. The motives were not thought to arise from benevolence, but from a wish to impose fetters on the French colonies, and injure their commerce, and if it had been made a question of power he was convinced that interest would be supposed to have a share in it. (3) If England had retained the colonies, unless upon the condition of abolition, it would have been said, that they had been retained for commercial reasons, and that it was only a pretence for keeping up the war, and retaining possession of them. In short, Castlereagh had done his best and had endeavored to secure abolition at the shortest possible time and to have the area of the African coast on which slaves could be taken confined to the south of the equator. France, however, claimed these things within her control and subject to her juris-

(1) H. C. Jour. 69:389. Parl. Deb. 28:277, 78.

(2) Parl. Deb. 28:268-297.

(3) This view was substantiated by Wellington in his despatches.
Wellington to Wilberforce, Oct. 8, 1814. Wellington Despatches 12:142.
Wellington to Wilberforce, Oct. 15, 1814. Wellington Despatches 12:114.
Wellington to Wilberforce, Dec. 14, 1814. Wellington Despatches 12:213.

diction. Moreover, much had been secured by the treaty. The good will of the French government had been gained, which would be worth much at the coming Congress where things of the most vital nature would come up for settlement. As a result of Napoleon's tyranny there was absolutely no sentiment in France in favor of abolition, and for this reason the surrender of the trade on condition of restoration of the colonies would have been considered disgraceful by the French people. But with the pledge of co-operation at the Congress much good might be accomplished and France would abolish the trade at the specified time. Even if it had been abandoned by France, it would still be carried on by Spain and Portugal. In fact, the situation in France was far more satisfactory than in Spain and in Portugal where vast colonial interests put the question fairly beyond the control of their governments. (1) "Anxious as they were for the adoption of the principle," he said, "contended for by his honourable friend (Mr. Wilberforce) they did not think it right to force it upon nations, at the expense of their honour, and of the tranquility of the world. Morals were never well taught by the sword; their dissemination might sometimes be made a pretext for ambition, but it was to the light of experience, to the promulgation of wisdom, and not to the exercise of violence, or the influence of war, that they could look with any prospect of success, for the abolition of the slave trade." (2) Many feared that the trade would not be abolished at the end of five years and one member expressed his doubts in the following words: "But the evil is to end in five years. This, Sir, is the usual way in which vice tries to flatter and deceive itself, and to stifle the upbraidings of conscience.

(1) Parl. Deb. 28:280 ff.

(2) Parl. Deb. 28:284.

Another throw, and the gamester will quit his play--but he persists to his ruin,--another winter, and the house-breaker and highwayman will abstain from acts of violence, and discontinue their nightly depredations--but they go on in their guilty career till they meet with the condign punishment which they have merited--and will the course of the French government be different?" (1)

In the Lords, where the opposition was led by Lord Grenville, the debate and the address were not unlike those in the Commons. Grenville's speech was an able oratorical effort; his main point, however, was that the abolition of the slave trade should have been the condition of restoration of the colonies. But he went further and declared the first additional article contrary to the constitution because the slave trade had been abolished in England and made a felony. He, therefore, called on the Lords "to suspend at once the execution of this unhallowed article." "Withhold the restitution of your conquests," he said. "Persevere in that decision, unseduced by promise, untterrified by menace, until you have irrevocably established the abolition of the slave trade. No contract is binding whose performance is unlawful; no treaty valid which stipulates for crimes." (2) Grenville's motion calling for the correspondence was rejected by a vote of 62 to 27 whereupon a protest was entered on the Journals by the opposition. (3) On June 29th, Wilberforce moved an amendment to the address on the treaty of Peace in which confidence was expressed in the Government and further expression of opinion on this question was deferred till after the Congress. (4) Canning was entirely satisfied with the Treaty of Peace. However, if there was any blame, he felt it rested on himself and Mr. Wilberforce for not pressing the insertion of a sentiment in the address of May 5th, sufficiently decisive to have urged Castlereagh to insist upon the immediate and general

(1) Parl. Deb. 28:293.
 (2) Parl. Deb. 28:299 ff.
 (3) Parl. Deb. 28:356, 57. Lords' Journals 49:1012.
 (4) Parl. Deb. 28:442.

oppression of the slave trade, and thus to have armed him with the authority of Parliament to use a tone of firmness to France and others, upon this important subject. As the House had declined to speak in decisive language, a discretion was left to Lord Castlereagh, which he had doubtless exercised to the best of his judgment. (1)

In the meantime, England was thoroughly aroused on this question. In thirty-four days beginning June 27, 1814, 772 petitions were presented to the House of Commons alone with nearly one million signatures. (2) When one considers that at this time the population of Great Britain was far smaller than at the present time, the meaning of this vast number of signatures becomes clear. (2') It has been necessary to follow the anti-slave trade movement in England both in Parliament and in the country in order to understand the efforts which were made by the Government during the following year. The feeling of the British people was one of the mysteries of the time which they hardly understood themselves and which was entirely misunderstood in other countries. Parliament was adjourned at the end of July, 1814, when England was in a mood ready to fight for the abolition of this inhuman traffic, (3) or willing to make almost any sacrifice. Engaged in a war for the freedom of Europe, when the war ended and this freedom was to be secured at a Congress of the Powers, the British people had, it seemed, but one interest, the universal suppression of a commerce, of which they admitted they had enjoyed the largest share.

Since Parliament had adjourned, the cause was left exclusively in the hands of the King's Ministers, who had already worked at it actively for

(1) Parl. Deb. 28:447.

(2) H. C. Jour. 69:450 ff.

(2') In 1816 England and Wales had a population of about 11,000,000; and Scotland of about 2,000,000.

(3) Wellington to Sir Henry Wellesley, July 29, 1814. Wellington,

Supplementary Despatches 9:165.

several months. We shall now endeavor to trace their diplomatic efforts. The nations still engaged in the trade were France, Spain, and Portugal. Of these France had made stipulations in the Treaty of Paris, which, as we have seen, were very unsatisfactory to the English Abolitionists. Spain and Portugal had taken no steps toward the solution of the question. Even before the Treaty of Paris, Zachary Macaulay had written a letter to Castlereagh which threw much light on the unity of feeling in England. "In England," he wrote, "a very sanguine and general wish, and even expectation, prevail, that the treaty about to be concluded will contain an explicit renunciation of the slave trade on the part of France. And this wish and expectation are by no means confined to those who on general grounds are adverse to the slave trade, but extend to almost every individual connected with our colonial possessions. The former apprehend, from the renewal of the slave trade by France, among a great variety of other evils, the extinction of all their hopes respecting Africa; while the latter anticipate from it the eventual ruin of the British Colonies." (1)

After the additional article in the Treaty of Paris had been agreed upon but before the signing of the treaty, Castlereagh pressed Talleyrand to agree to immediate abolition or at the very least to limitation of the trade on the African Coast south of Cape Palmas but without success, (2) except that Talleyrand promised that the king would do all he could to carry out the wishes of Castlereagh's Government in restricting and discouraging the trade. Marked improvements had been made on the coast of Africa north of the equator and especially north of Cape Three Points and this accounted

(1) Zachary Macaulay to Castlereagh, May 29, 1814. Castlereagh Correspondence 10:47, 48.

(2) Castlereagh to Prince Benevent, May 26, 1814. Supplementary Despatches 9:110. Prince Benevent to Castlereagh, May 5, 26, 1814, 9:111, 113. Castlereagh to Benevent 9:112.

for the efforts made to limit the trade south of this territory. The agitation in Parliament had a decisive effect on Castlereagh and he wrote Talleyrand a personal letter asking for aid out of his embarrassment and praying for a French order confining the slave trade north of the line. He urged this especially as the Portuguese were bound by treaty not to resort to this coast for slaves while other nations abstained from it. (1) The Duke of Wellington wrote from London that the people were ready to go to war for abolition. (2) In order to provide against reluctance in abolition of the slave trade even at limited time, it was suggested that the Powers acting in concert prohibit the importation into their respective dominions of colonial produce grown by Powers refusing to enter into the proposed concert. This measure would leave them in possession of their own market but would take away any motive for increasing their cultivation in counter-action of the general system. (3) Wellington on Aug. 6, 1814, was instructed to make another effort to secure immediate abolition on account of public feeling but failing in this, he was to try to secure a limitation of importation to the number actually needed to supply existing plantations. He was especially urged to press for a decree securing the abolition north of the line, at least not farther west than Cape Formosa and vessels to the northward were to be subject to seizure. (4) Secondly, he was to prevail upon France to grant reciprocal right of search within certain latitudes. (5)

At the beginning of September, 1814, Clarkson called the attention of the Government to a rumour he had heard that France would give up the trade

(1) Castlereagh to Prince Benevent, July 16, 1814. Supple. Despatches, 9:163.
 (2) Wellington to Sir Henry Wellesley, July 29, 1814. Supple. Despatches 9:165.
 (3) Castlereagh to Wellington, Aug. 6, 1814. Supple. Despatches 9:167.
 (4) Castlereagh to Wellington, Aug. 6, 1814. Supple. Despatches 9:174.
 (5) The mutual right of search was suggested by the Secretary of the African Society to Earl Bathurst June 22, 1814. Supple. Despatches 9:150.
 Castlereagh to Wellington, Aug. 6, 1814. Supple. Despatches 9:175.

immediately for a Colony in the West Indies. (1) Accordingly, the Government decided to offer Trinidad or the option of a money compensation for immediate abolition. The question of presenting the proposition at Paris or at Vienna was left to Castlereagh and Wellington. (2) They decided to present it at both places at about the same time, so that the mind of the King would be prepared when he received a notice of the offer from his minister at Vienna. The offer was made and received unfavorably but not rejected definitively. (3) In the meantime the British people had become very anxious about the proposed decree, which was to prohibit the traffic north of the line. (4) The sentiment of the French people, such sentiment as there was, was against prohibition. (5) Consequently, there was a considerable delay in issuing this promised order, which did not appear until the first days of November. (6) The negotiations with Spain and Portugal were largely of financial nature. Spain was promised a subsidy of about £800,000 for limitation south of the line and prohibition within five years, and 10,000,000 dollars loan in case of immediate abolition. (7) Very little was done in regard to Portugal before the opening of the Congress as the Portuguese government was in Brazil.

Let us now turn our attention to the Assembly of Powers gathered at Vienna. England was represented at the Congress by the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, Lord Castlereagh. He was instructed to press for three things in regard to the suppression of the slave trade. In the first

- (1) Wellington to Castlereagh, Sept. 2, 1814. Supple. Despatches 9:211.
- (2) Liverpool to Castlereagh, Sept. 7, 1814. Supple. Despatches 9:225.
Liverpool to Wellington, Sept. 7, 1814. Supple. Despatches 9:225 ff.
- (3) Wellington to Castlereagh, Oct. 4, 1814. Supple. Despatches 9:316.
Talleyrand's Briefwechsel mit König Ludwig XVIII während des Wiener Congresses, Feb. 15, 1815, p. 257.
- (4) Liverpool to Wellington, Oct. 5, 1814. Supple. Despatches 9:321. Liverpool to Castlereagh, Oct. 14, 1814, 9:343.
- (5) King of France to Prince Regent, Sept. 2, 1814. Supple. Despatches 9:217. This letter was written in reply to a personal letter from the Prince Regent, Aug. 9, 1814. Supple. Despatches 9:176.
- (6) Wilberforce to Wellington, Nov. 16, 1814. Supple. Despatches 9:435.
- (7) Wellington to Sir Henry Wellesley, July 29, 1814. Supple. Despatches 9:165, 166.

place, an immediate and universal abolition by the European powers. Secondly, a concession of mutual right of search within limited areas; and lastly, the exclusion of colonial produce from those countries which would not agree to this system of abolition. (1) Castlereagh was an able man but the people of England, as has been pointed out, had no perspective of the work to be done by the Congress as they seemed to be interested in the slave trade almost to the exclusion of everything else. Consequently, they much overrated his ability to move the plenipotentiaries of the Congress, intent on other matters more immediately interesting to themselves. The great Continental Powers having, with the exception of France, no colonial possessions, regarded the slave trade as a remote question with which they had little concern but they were willing, however, to follow England a reasonable way because of the assistance, which they had received from her during the struggle with Napoleon. This assistance was largely financial and they were deeply indebted to her for many subsidies without which their armies could not have been equipped and maintained. Unable to fathom the deep feeling existing on this question, they could not comprehend the earnestness with which Castlereagh pleaded the cause of the negro race. Moreover, accustomed to suspect an interested motive in every political change which was strenuously advocated, they settled into the belief that selfish objects were in reality at the bottom of this pretended zeal for the interests of humanity. They imagined that the English, having become aware of the folly of their own action against the slave trade, were now desirous of preventing any other nation from enjoying the advantage of it. (2) With such a feeling existing at the Congress it was not strange that Castlereagh experienced the greatest difficulty in securing any action. In order to prepare the

(1) Liverpool to Castlereagh, Dec. 9, 1814. Supple. Despatches. 9:469, 70.

(2) Castlereagh to Liverpool, Dec. 18, 1814. M. S. Alison, Lives of Lord Castlereagh and Sir C. Stewart 2:583.

minds of the plenipotentiaries on this question, he caused to be published some of the best works of the English abolitionists adding to them such evidence as proved that the suppression of the slave trade was not inconsistent with the best colonial policy. (1)

From Spain and Portugal he experienced decided resistance; from the other Powers indifference. France was unwilling to go farther than she had already gone. Spain and Portugal contended for eight years limit. A decided effort to make France shorten the period of five years might have led her to make common cause with these two powers. (2) The colonial powers thought the traffic necessary to their colonies; the other powers alleged that they did not understand the question and were averse to taking a decided stand on it. The demands of Castlereagh in regard to the right of search met with decided resistance as it was well known that this right would be exercised by no Power but England, which alone had the means and the desire of putting down the slave trade. The discussion of this point should have been confined to the maritime Powers but as Castlereagh stood alone among them, he endeavored to improve his position by securing the admission of all the powers. He thus obtained a little more support. He argued that it would be better for the Powers to confine themselves to the slaves they already had than to increase the inequality between the Whites and Blacks by fresh importations. To this the Spanish and Portuguese replied that this

(1) Castlereagh to Wilberforce, Nov. 11, 1814. Castlereagh Correspondence 10:199. Castlereagh to Clarkson, Nov. 11, 1814. Castlereagh Correspondence 10:201. The attitude of France is set forth in Wellington to Wilberforce, Dec. 14, 1814. Wellington Despatches 12:212, 213. Wellington to Wilberforce, Oct. 15, 1814. Wellington Despatches 12:114.

(2) Liverpool to Canning, Dec. 15, 1814. Supple. Despatches 9:483. Liverpool to Castlereagh, Jan. 16, 1815. Supple. Despatches 9:529. Liverpool to Canning, Feb. 16, 1815. Supple. Despatches 9:566.

was true in the English colonies, which had been stocked with slaves during the maritime war, whereas no importations had been made into their colonies. (1) Castlereagh offered to indemnify the Portuguese for captured ships in return for immediate abolition north of the equator but was asked and urged by Liverpool to fight for the adoption of the French rule of five years, as this was the utmost limit permitted by the Parliamentary addresses. (2) Numerous conferences took place on the subject in most of which Castlereagh stood alone. And in spite of the Parliamentary addresses he had to content himself with a general declaration against the slave trade, and he succeeded in inducing Spain and Portugal to promise rather vaguely that they would abolish the trade in eight years. France stuck to the agreement made in the Treaty of Paris. (3) Portugal agreed to confine the trade south of the line and received in return £300,000 for captured ships and the balance of a loan of £600,000 made in 1807. (4) Spain received £800,000 on very similar conditions. (5) France received neither a money compensation nor an island but used the offer to draw Great Britain nearer to her on various questions before the Congress, especially on the question of Naples. (6) The reciprocal right of search was met by the principle that during peace every nation had a right to regulate its own vessels according to its inclination. The exclusion of colonial produce was held to be premature when the traffic was formally permitted to certain nations by express treaty.

- (1) Talleyrand's Briefwechsel mit Ludwig XVIII., Feb. 8, 1815, p. 238.
- (2) Liverpool to Castlereagh, Jan. 6, 1815. Supple. Despatches 9:529.
- (3) Talleyrand's Briefwechsel mit Ludwig XVIII., Feb. 8, 1815, p. 238.
- (4) Parl. Deb. 32:217, 218. Convention between Great Britain & Portugal signed at Vienna, Jan. 21, 1815. Parl. Deb. 32:219. Convention between Great Britain & Portugal signed at Vienna, Jan. 22, 1815.
- (5) Wellington to Sir Henry Wellesley, July 29, 1814. Supple. Despatches 9:165. Liverpool to Canning, Feb. 16, 1815. Supple. Despatches 9:566.
- (6) Talleyrand's Briefwechsel mit Ludwig XVIII., Feb. 15, 1815, p. 257.

Castlereagh who was instructed to secure something definite to present to Parliament was compelled, as we have seen, to content himself with a general declaration from the Congress, condemning the slave trade as a crime against civilization and humanity and expressing a unanimous wish for its speedy abolition, for which the "public voice in all civilized countries called aloud." (1) The actual carrying out of this desire was, however, left to negotiation between the individual Powers. Castlereagh left the Congress in February shortly after the above mentioned arrangements had been made in order to be in his place in the House of Commons. By this time, Napoleon had left Elba and landed in France. The French King left France in all possible haste and Napoleon once more ascended the throne of France.

On March 29th, Napoleon issued a decree abolishing the French slave trade. His motive in doing this was very simple. He wanted the good will of the English people and sought to gain it by this means as he was well acquainted with public feeling in England on this question. (2) After the battle of Waterloo, Louis XVIII. was again restored to the French throne. Castlereagh had been forced to defend himself against the bitter attacks of Parliament during the summer of 1814 and he knew that it would not be possible to face English public opinion again without having secured the abolition of this traffic by France. Louis XVIII. had been restored to his throne by England, Prussia, Austria, and Russia. These powers under the inspiration of the British minister drew up a protocol

(1) Parl. Deb. 32:200 ff. Act No. 15, Declaration of the Powers on the question of the slave trade, Feb. 8, 1815.

(2) Parl. Deb. 32:327. No. 19, Despatch from Castlereagh to Liverpool, July 31, 1815 giving letter from Talleyrand to Castlereagh, July 30, 1815.

in which they commanded the French king to maintain the abolition of the slave trade, the act for the abolition of which they held as being still in force. (1) In accordance with this protocol, Castlereagh sent a note to Talleyrand stating that "The British conceive that under the operation of the Law of France, as it now stands, it is strictly prohibited to French subjects to carry on a traffic in slaves; and that nothing but a specific ordinance could again revive the commerce; but, whether this be the true construction or not of the state of the law in a technical sense, they feel persuaded that his Most Christian Majesty will never lend his authority to revive a system of this nature which has been, de facto, abolished." (2) The French king had pledged himself to immediate abolition before the battle of Waterloo was fought while he was still a fugitive. This together with Castlereagh's note had the desired effect. (3) July 30, 1815, Talleyrand informed Castlereagh that the King had abolished the French slave trade. Talleyrand maintained that the abolition was due, not to the decree of the Usurper, Napoleon, but to the King's decree because all of Napoleon's decrees were null and void. (4)

This really marks the end of another period in the history of emancipation but it might also be well to notice the additional article to the treaty of Paris of Nov. 20, 1815, and the article in the treaty of Peace between Great Britain and the United States. (5) Both were general declarations against the trade and were intended as foundations for further negotiations and pledges of co-operation rather more than anything else.

(1) Parl. Deb. 32:305, 306.

(2) Parl. Deb. 32:306, No. 175. Despatch from Castlereagh to Liverpool containing the note sent to Talleyrand, July 27, 1815.

(3) Parl. Deb. 32: 306, No. 17. Despatch from Castlereagh to Liverpool giving a copy of the note sent to Talleyrand.

(4) Parl. Deb. 32:307, No. 19. Talleyrand to Castlereagh, July 30, 1815.

(5) United States. Treaties and Conventions (ed 1889) p. 405.

The former engaged the two powers to spare no efforts "to secure through their ministers at London and Paris the most effectual measures for the entire and definitive abolition of a commerce so odious and so strongly condemned by the laws of religion and of nature." (1) The suppression of the French slave trade marked the end of another period. The trade was abolished by all Europe except Spain and Portugal, which had given promises of abolition in the future. The part of Africa which had made the greatest advances toward civilization was secured against the slave hunters. Thus we see that the work of the years 1807-1815 was quite as important as that of the years 1787-1807. The end of the slave trade as a legal commerce seemed near at hand.

(1) Parl. Deb. 32:253.

THE ABOLITION OF THE SLAVE TRADE.

Fourth Period 1815-1823.

Thus far we have traced the history of the abolition of the slave trade to the close of the Napoleonic wars, which came to an end with the second Peace of Paris, November 1815. By that time, the only Powers which still refused to abolish this traffic were Spain and Portugal but both of these had agreed to confine the trade to the southern coast of Africa and had declared their willingness to consider the question of total abolition at the end of eight years. However, it soon became apparent that so long as these Powers carried on the trade, the benefits arising from the abandonment of the trade by the other Powers would in a large measure be nugatory as it was concentrated under these flags so that all the West Indies were supplied from the Spanish islands. The efforts of English statesmen, then in this period from 1815 to 1823 were directed toward securing the abolition of the slave trade by Spain and Portugal at the earliest possible moment and toward the suppression of all illicit trade. To accomplish the latter an effort was made to secure at least a limited mutual right of search, which was the only means by which the clandestine trade could be driven from the seas. To induce Spain and Portugal to agree to abolition at the earliest possible time the proposition of excluding colonial produce was brought forward.

However, the whole question entered on a new phase when the people of England found out that abolition was not abolition. The trade, in fact, flourished although this was not fully known till toward the end of this period. To check the illicit trade into the British colonies, a Slave Registry bill was proposed in Parliament by means of which it was hoped

this slave trade might be checked. But more than ever before, it now became clear that slavery itself was as much of an evil as the slave trade. This was brought home to the people when they learned of the actual conditions of slavery and how the principles of justice and morality were defeated on every hand. Consequently, at the end of this period of time, which is marked by the death of Castlereagh, Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs for about ten years, and by the unsuccessful results obtained at the Congress of Verona, the champions of the suppression of the slave trade formed the Anti-Slavery society at the beginning of 1823.

Let us now study the diplomatic efforts of this period. They were, as has been stated, directed toward two ends. Firstly, the securing the consent of Spain and Portugal to the abolition of this inhuman traffic and secondly, the suppression of the illicit trade. The questions were never out of the minds of the ministers and early in 1816 Castlereagh addressed a note to the different Powers, which had agreed to meet again to consider this question in London or in Paris. At this time Castlereagh thought it likely that Spain would adhere to the eight year limit, (1) but a little later he said that negotiations were in progress with Spain having in view the shortening of this period of eight years. In September, 1816, he addressed a note to the Czar in which he called attention to the fact that at the Congress of Vienna, it was declared by the plenipotentiaries of Russia, Austria, Prussia, and Great Britain that May, 1819, the period then fixed by France for final abolition, was the utmost period which the respective Sovereigns could possibly be induced to recognize as justifiable or necessary for the trade to endure; and it was in contemplation of this period, as an extreme limit, that they reserved to themselves to exclude

(1) Parl. Deb. 39:599.

from their dominions, upon a principle of moral obligation,--the colonial produce of States continuing to trade in slaves beyond that period. The question at issue was the formation of an alliance against the Barbary States and Castlereagh suggested that abolition by these two Powers in May, 1819, be made a condition of their accession to the proposed alliance as it was extremely illogical for these powers to frown on the actions of the Barbary pirates while they themselves were engaged in an inhuman traffic. (1)

The negotiations with Spain were quite tedious, however, and the subject was kept quiet till July, 1817, when Lord Grenville complained of the great extent to which the slave trade was carried on by the subjects of Spain, and that too on the very coast of Africa, which had been singled out by England for civilization. Not only was the trade carried on to a very great extent but with redoubled horrors as there were absolutely no rules or regulations to control the traders. The vessels employed in it were armed as if intended for warlike purposes and built for speed and not for the comfort of the cargo. (2) These vessels were engaged in frequent contests with British cruizers and this threatened to lead to hostilities between the Governments. Wilberforce in the Commons had brought out the same facts. Besides Spain and Portugal, the chief offender was Holland. Wilberforce dwelt on the horrors of the "middle passage." In a letter from Sir James Zeo, it was stated that a vessel of 120 tons had conveyed 600 slaves. In another case where 540 negroes were embarked, 340 had died. The greater part of the Spanish slaves were sent to Havannah, which served as a distributing center. By a paper obtained from the Cortes, it appeared that there had been imported into that colony, Cuba, in eleven years, from 1799

(1) Castlereagh Correspondence 11:301 ff.

(2) Parl. Deb. 36:1366 ff.

to 1811, about 110,000 slaves or about 10,000 a year; and in the three last years, the importation had been much greater--even amounting to 25,000 a year. Hence the contention that the Spanish Colonies were denuded of slaves was mere pretense. In fact, the Spanish colonies were being well supplied with slaves, so that they threatened to rival the British colonies in prosperity. Consequently, it was necessary to put an end to this illicit traffic, if there was to be any hope of the British colonies selling their produce beyond the confines of the empire. In case of hesitancy on the part of Spain and Portugal, Wilberforce advised the exclusion of colonial produce from the Colonies of these states. (1) An address was moved by him in which these ideas found expression and in which His Majesty was urged to push the negotiations with unflinching zeal and to resort if need be to the exclusion of colonial produce. It was hoped, moreover, that some general concert for ascertaining and bringing to punishment the offending parties might be established. (2) Castlereagh was in sympathy with the address and said that negotiations were in progress, which he hoped would be completed soon. (3) A certain Mr. Moore was much alarmed over the injustice which was done by those in charge of the enforcement of the abolition acts. He gave an instance where a man had been condemned to fourteen years banishment in Botany Bay but was liberated by the Secretary for the Colonies and had since been successful in suit with the Government for losses sustained. He deprecated the wholesale legislation, which had been passed by Parliament during the preceding years. Mr. Brougham did not understand the meaning of wholesale legislation. The act 51 George III. was intended to prevent trading in slaves, by declaring the act a felony

(1) Parl. Deb. 36:1321-23.

(2) Parl. Deb. 36:1323 ff. H. C. Jour. 72:470.

(3) Parl. Deb. 36:1330.

anywhere within the British dominions; and secondly, to prevent trading in slaves by British subjects anywhere, either within the British dominions or elsewhere. However, the act was founded on a statute of William, (1) which had been repealed and hence the court had no jurisdiction although the man was guilty. Of course, in his extremity, it was but natural that it should occur to him that he was an American citizen. Mr. Brougham was not sanguine about inducing Spain and Portugal to agree to abolition and even if they agreed, he thought some arrangement among the greater Powers of Europe by which a mutual right of search would be established was absolutely essential. Otherwise, these Peninsular Powers would not observe their public declarations. (2) Mr. Marryat called attention to the instructions given to naval officers, which were not in accord with the decisions of the Court of Admiralty. Consequently, the decisions of colonial courts had been reversed quite frequently and restitution made far beyond the original value of the cargo. (3)

In January 1818, Castlereagh was able to lay before the House a treaty with Spain relative to the slave trade signed at Madrid September 23, 1817. This treaty was long and very elaborate. It provided for the abolition of the slave trade in all the Spanish dominions after May 30, 1820 and the traffic was prohibited north of the equator. For these concessions, Spain received £400,000 to cover loss of captured vessels and losses, which were a necessary consequence of abolition. The traffic was declared illicit by British ships, and under the British flag, or for the account of British subjects, by any vessel or under any flag whatsoever. Secondly, by Spanish ships north of the line and by Spanish ships, and under the Spanish flag, or for the

(1) 11 and 12 Will. III. C. 7.

(2) Parl. Deb. 36:1330 ff.

(3) Parl. Deb. 36:1334.

account of Spanish subjects, by any vessel or under any flag. Also illicit under the British and Spanish flags, for the account of the subjects of any other government. And lastly, by Spanish vessels bound for any port not in the dominions of his Catholic Majesty. Spain pledged herself to adopt measures to enforce these provisions. Until 1820, vessels engaged in the traffic were to be furnished with passports by the Spanish Government, which pledged itself to make every effort to render the journey as comfortable as possible for the slaves. Vessels engaging in the traffic contrary to these rules, might be visited by cruisers of either nation especially designated for this purpose and furnished with instructions. In case of slaves actually found on board, they were to be brought to trial before mixed tribunals established for this purpose. These mixed commissions were to have primary and final jurisdiction in all cases. One was to reside on the coast of Africa and one in the West Indies; one in Spanish, the other in British territory. The form of a passport for Spanish vessels destined for the lawful traffic in slaves was made part of the treaty. This provided that not more than five slaves for every two tons should be carried. Another part of the treaty consisted of instructions for the British and Spanish cruisers. This provided, among other things, that the captain and two-thirds of the men were to be Spanish and this provision can be accounted for by the fact that not only a large amount of British capital but also a large number of Englishmen were engaged in the Spanish trade. The last addition to the treaty was the regulation for the mixed commissions. This described the composition, jurisdiction, and form of procedure of these tribunals. (1)

(1) Parl. Deb. 37:67-79.

It has been necessary to describe this treaty in some detail not only to show the great care with which it was drawn up but also because the treaties concluded between Great Britain on the one side and Portugal and Holland on the other differed but little from this one in their essentials. Portugal, however, did not make any agreement in regard to the abolition of the trade.(1) Castlereagh in discussing the treaty called attention to its importance. "All the crowned heads except Portugal so far as south of the line was concerned had either abolished the slave trade or entered into stipulations for its abolition at some future period. Consequently, there was a broad line of demarcation between legal and illicit trade. At Vienna, the great Powers made a declaration, which stamped the slave trade as disgraceful, and made every state anxious to get out of it as soon as circumstances could admit of its doing so. The trade though, perhaps, carried on to a less extent than at that period was now carried on with greater cruelty. France had been faithful in her efforts to check the illicit trade but, nevertheless, the trade as a whole had much increased during the years of peace. To check this the states of Europe had bound themselves, for the first time in its diplomatic history, by a mutual stipulation to exercise the right of visit over their merchantmen. (2)

The first country to concede the right of visit was Portugal and a treaty by which a certain period for the total abolition of this evil was fixed had been signed. Though the ratifications had not yet been exchanged, he had received an official notice that it had been approved by the Government. (3) Castlereagh thought the £400,000 granted quite reasonable

(1) Parl. Deb. 38:996, 1039-1043.

(2) Parl. Deb. 37:232 ff.

(3) This treaty was abortive and there was no further mention made of it. Portugal did not abolish the slave trade until a number of years later. Parl. Deb. 37:234.

for the results obtained, especially in view of the fact that at one time Spain had been offered £850,000 upon the conditions of this treaty, together with a loan of 10,000,000 dollars for immediate abolition, and at that time no member of Parliament had been heard against it. But now a certain Sir Gilbert Heathcote called attention to what £400,000 would buy for the poor. Several members feared the money would be used by Spain to crush the South Americans. (1) One member thought Spain under a pledge to abolish the slave trade in eight years, that is, in 1823, but Castlereagh explained that the Spanish minister had only stated eight years as the period when Spain might find it convenient to enter into arrangements with a view to the abolition of the slave trade, but that there was no positive engagement, which pledged the Spanish nation to the discontinuance of the traffic at the expiration of eight years. (2) Mr. C. Grant called the attention of the House to the fact that if the Spanish Government had been interested merely in the amount of money they could receive, they would have accepted the offer of the merchants of Havannah, who had offered five times as much for its continuance, as was stipulated for in the treaty. The division resulted in a vote of 56 in favor of the treaty with but 4 against it, which was a very small division indeed. (3) In the Lords as in the Commons some thought the treaty obtained at too high a price but on the whole it was considered quite satisfactory. (4)

The treaty signed with Portugal for establishing the mutual right of search was like that with Spain. (5) That with the Netherlands, however, differed in that European waters were exempted from its operation and that

- (1) Parl. Deb. 37:240 ff.
- (2) Parl. Deb. 37:249.
- (3) Parl. Deb. 37:255.
- (4) Parl. Deb. 38:856.
- (5) Parl. Deb. 38:996.

provision was made for an equal number of cruisers of search on each side, thus giving Great Britain no advantage on account of her superior navy. In all other essentials it followed the Spanish treaty closely. (1) About this same time Wilberforce presented an address in which he complained of the renewed activity of the French slave traders on the northwest coast of Africa but when Castlereagh assured him that the matter had not escaped the attention of the Government, he withdrew his motion. (2)

Let us now turn our attention to the Congress of Aix-la-Chapelle, which opened Oct. 24, 1818. At this Congress, Castlereagh made two propositions. Firstly, that the five Powers join in urging Portugal and Brazil to abolish the traffic, May 20, 1820; secondly, that the powers adopt the principle of a mutual qualified right of search. Both of these propositions failed although they were strongly urged by England. (3) In a letter written by Mr. James Stephen to Castlereagh before the opening of the Congress, the importance of getting France to give up her claim of sovereignty over San Domingo was clearly set forth. An effort by France to reconquer the island would have led to the renewal of the slave trade to an unlimited extent as during the struggle many of the negroes would be killed. To supply these and to bring the island back to its one time economic condition would have meant an enormous slave trade. This would have resulted in great economic loss to the British West Indies, which Mr. Stephen made clear in his letter by showing what the feeling of the English planters would be toward such a revival. (4)

Castlereagh took an early opportunity to approach the United States on

(1) Parl. Deb. 38:1040 ff.

(2) Parl. Deb. 38:1317, 1318.

(3) Amer. State Papers, Foreign V. pp. 113-127.

(4) Mr. James Stephen to Lord Castlereagh, Sept. 8, 1818. Castlereagh Correspondence 11:3 ff.

this matter suggesting to Minister Rush, June 20, 1818, a mutual but strictly limited right of search. (1) Rush was ordered to tell him that the United States was anxious to suppress the traffic, but to state that the concessions asked for were of a character not adaptable to our institutions. (2) At this stage negotiations were transferred to Washington and the new British Minister, Mr. Stratford Canning, approached Adams with full instructions in December, 1820. (3) Even the people of the United States had come to realize by this time that the suppression of the slave trade was an absolute impossibility without some concession looking toward a right of search. In 1817, a House committee had urged this concession, (4) and a motion to the same effect was made in the Senate. (5) In 1820 and 1821, two House committee reports were made and one of these urged the granting of a right of search and was adopted but failed in the Senate. (6) Adams, however, saw constitutional objections to the plan, which he wrote to Mr. Canning Dec. 30, 1820, setting forth his ideas very clearly and forcibly. As a counter-proposition, he suggested co-operation of the fleets on the coast of Africa, a proposal which was promptly accepted. (7) The slave trade was again the subject of international consideration at the Congress of Verona in 1822. The five great Powers were represented. The English delegates declared that, although only Portugal and Brazil allowed the trade, yet the traffic was at that moment carried on to a greater extent than ever before. They said that in seven months of the year 1821,

(1) Annals of Cong. 16 Cong. 2d Sess. p. 1318. Amer. State Papers, Foreign V. pp. 71, 72, 111, 112. (2) Annals of Cong. 16 Cong. 2d Sess. p. 1320. Amer. State Papers, Foreign V. pp. 112, 113. (3) Annals of Cong. 16 Cong. 2d Sess. p. 1327. Amer. State Papers, Foreign V. pp. 75, 76. (4) House Doc., 14 Cong. 2d Sess. II. No. 77. (5) Annals of Cong., 15 Cong. 1st Sess. pp. 71, 73-78, 94-109. The motion was opposed largely by Southern members, and passed by a vote of 17 to 16. (6) One was reported, May 9, 1820, by Mercer's committee, and passed May 12. Annals of Cong., 16 Cong. 1st Sess. pp. 697-9. A similar resolution passed the House next session, and a committee reported in favor of the right of search. Annals of Cong. 2d Sess. pp. 1065-71, also pp. 447, 743, 865, 1469. (7) Annals of Cong. 16 Cong. 2 Sess. p. 1328-1330. Amer. State Papers., Foreign V. pp. 76, 77.

no less than 21,000 slaves were abducted, and 352 vessels entered African ports north of the equator. (1) This crime, it was pointed out, was committed against the laws of every European power, and of America, excepting only Portugal and for that reason it required something more than the ordinary operation of Law to prevent it. Castlereagh in his instructions for the Duke of Wellington, which were the last instructions he ever drew up, did not define his position on the question of the suppression of the slave trade, (2) but we may be certain that his position was not essentially different from that of Canning and that he would have urged the same means for its suppression. Canning, in his supplementary instructions to Wellington on this question, recommended practically the same things, which had been advised by Castlereagh with the exception that he called for a renewal of the declaration of 1815. However, he gave an excellent summary of the whole question. He attributed the lowered tone of sentiment abroad on this question to a change in the spirit of the times and also to the idea inculcated by other colonial Powers that Great Britain was only endeavoring to induce her rivals to share the injury she had inflicted on herself by abolition. Canning denied that colonial depression was due to the extinction of this inhuman traffic but maintained that the abolition of the slave trade had been detrimental to Africa, "The slave trade," he said, "so far from being diminished in extent by the exact amount of what was in former times the British demand, is upon the whole, perhaps, greater than it was at the period when that demand was highest; and the aggregate of human suffering and the waste of human life, in the transport of slaves from the coast of Africa to the colonies, is increased in a ratio enormously greater than the increase of positive

(1) Minute upon the slave trade by Wellington. Supple. Despatches, S 3, 1:549.

(2) G. R. Gleig, Life of Wellington, 4:372-77. Gives the instructions of Castlereagh, intended for himself but given to Wellington.

numbers. It seems as if those who continue this abominable traffic had a malicious pleasure in defeating the calculations of benevolence, and in visiting upon the innocent victims of their avarice the fruitless endeavors to rescue those victims from their power." (1)

Canning had secured an extension of the treaties for the suppression of the slave trade by obtaining the infliction of the same penalties of capture and confiscation on vessels on board of which slaves might have been as on vessels with slaves actually on board. Moreover, he hoped to secure the admission of the peculiar fitting of a ship as sufficient evidence for condemnation. But little could be hoped from the Congress of Verona. Portugal continued the trade, France was openly hostile and the United States lukewarm. In France, there was no public feeling on the question and the anxiety of Great Britain was attributed to selfish motives. In fact, a ministry which agreed to a mutual right of visit would sign its own immediate downfall and it was impossible to secure any effective laws from the Chambers. The French had suggested the exchange of the French West African settlements for the Isle of Bourbon so that England could guard this coast effectively but Canning pointed out that England would be trading a good island for nothing without aiding the cause in the least as the French in possession of both the Indian islands would carry on the trade more vigorously than ever before on the east coast of Africa. The best chance of success was in the exclusion of colonial produce. (2)

In accordance with these instructions and suggestions of Canning, the English plenipotentiary recommended three things: 1. That each country denounce the trade as piracy, with a view of founding upon the aggregate of

(1) Wellington, the Duke of, Supple. Despatches, S 3, 1:323-4.

(2) Wellington, Duke of, Supple. Despatches (Jan. 1819-Dec. 1832) S 3, Vol. 1:322-328.

such separate declarations a general law to be incorporated into the Law of Nations. 2. A withdrawing of the flags of Powers from persons not natives of these States, who engage in the traffic under the flags of these States. 3. A refusal to admit to their domains the produce of colonies of States allowing the trade, a measure which would apply to Brazil and Portugal alone. These proposals were not accepted. Austria and Russia would agree to the first two only. France refused to denounce the trade as piracy; and Prussia was non-committal. The utmost that could be gained was another denunciation of the trade in general terms. (1) Thus, we see that at the end of this period, 1823, the trade was carried on as vigorously if not more vigorously, than ever before and that the Continental Powers and America refused to make the concession necessary for its suppression.

During this period, the question of slavery and the slave trade was not merely an international problem, but also a national one. How was the illicit importation of slaves into the British Colonies to be prevented? And how was the lot of the West Indian slaves to be improved and ameliorated? These were questions which engaged the attention of the English people more and more. In March, 1816, Lord Grenville asked for information relative to the effect of abolition on the commercial interests of the West Indies

(1) Wellington to Canning, Oct. 28, 1822. Supple. Despatches S 3, 1:451-52. Wellington to Canning, Nov. 19, 1822. Supple. Despatches, S 3, 1:547-55. This includes the Minute upon the Slave Trade, which the Duke of Wellington drew up and laid before the Emperor of Russia before presenting it to

the conference. Besides the three recommendations of general application, France was urged to establish a registry of slaves in her colonies and to "grant the ships and equipments of vessels engaged in the slave trade, and head money for slaves."

and on the condition of the slaves. He said that the anticipations of the abolitionists had been nearly fulfilled and that even the opponents of the measure rejoiced in it though they had predicted a great clandestine trade. (1) He suggested a registration of slaves under act of Parliament. By means of such an act an accurate list of all the slaves could be kept not only in the colonies but also in England and the illegal importation of slaves would practically cease. In fact, this period was marked by the struggle for an efficient registration law. Those who had opposed the abolition of the slave trade now became the opponents of registration by act of Parliament. Many of the old arguments were used such as that a measure of this nature was an unjust interference with local affairs and would alienate the affections of the colonies from the Mother Country. (2) It was denied by many that there was such a thing as importation of slaves into the British colonies except perhaps in the case of Trinidad and it was argued that the question of registration should be left to the decision of each individual colony. (3) In the meantime, an insurrection had broken out in Barbadoes, which the governor of the colony attributed to the delusion which had prevailed among the negroes on the subject of their complete emancipation. (4) Some ascribed the delusion to the slave registry bill. Lord Holland in moving an address in which the negroes were reprimanded for their uncalled for zeal for freedom said that the emancipation of slaves was a thing of the rather distant future. But it was urged on the colonial legislatures to make every provision which tended "to promote the moral and religious improvement, as well as the comfort

(1) Parl. Deb. 33:523 ff.

(2) Parl. Deb. 34:719 ff.

(3) Parl. Deb. 34:908 ff.

(4) Parl. Deb. 34:1271 ff.

and happiness of the negroes, and to make every necessary provision against any violation of the abolition acts." (1) In accordance with suggestions sent out from England registration bills were passed by the Assemblies of Jamaica, Barbadoes, and St. Vincent's. Little was done in urging parliamentary registration till April 1818, when Wilberforce moved for copies of all laws passed in or for any British colony since 1812 and for accounts showing the increase and decrease of the numbers of slaves in the different islands. (2)

The interest in the question, however, had been decreasing since the restoration of peace and we shall have to discuss the reasons for this change briefly. It was with the object of reviving this interest that Romilly called for information regarding certain occurrences in the islands of Dominica and Nevis which threw much light on the treatment of slaves in the West Indies. (3) Romilly attributed the loss of interest in the question to several things. About a year and a half before this time the African Institution had published a story which had been given to them of the cruel treatment of a slave in Antigua, and of the grand jury having thrown out a Bill of Indictment which was preferred against the author of the cruelty. (4) There was no foundation for the story and the printer of the society was prosecuted, convicted, and fined. (5) The West India interest of course made the most of this occurrence and endeavored to make people believe that all stories of cruelty in the West Indies were of an equally groundless

(1) Parl. Deb. 34:1277.

(2) Parl. Deb. 38:294 ff.

(3) Memoirs of Romilly 3:337.

(4) This was published in "The Tenth Report of the Directors of the African Institution" and read at the annual meeting, March 27, 1816.

(5) Howell's State Trials, 32:673-756.

nature. (1) The disturbances in Barbadoes already mentioned also operated against the abolitionists and the men interested in the West Indies began a regular propaganda publishing numerous pamphlets by means of which most of the newspapers were won over. Moreover, it was practically impossible to counteract the effect thus produced because the press could not be used as the Judges of the King's Bench, when they passed sentence on Hatchard, the printer of the African Institution, declared that it was a libel to say of a West Indian grand jury that they were disposed to refuse justice to an injured individual. (2) Consequently, no one could write in defence of the negroes without exposing himself to a prosecution for all the severities and cruelties were due to the injustice of the legislatures and tribunals. Therefore, it was only in Parliament that facts respecting the courts of justice in the West Indies, however well authenticated, could be brought forth. (3)

A grand jury in Dominica, Feb. 4, 1817, threw out the Bills preferred against masters for cruelty towards their slaves and presented the preferring such Bills to them as a nuisance. (4) Upon this the governor determined to try whether justice could not be obtained for injured slaves without the intervention of a grand jury. Accordingly, by his direction, the Attorney-General of the island filed three informations against persons for making their slaves work in chains and with iron collars round their necks, against the positive terms of an act of the Assembly. The facts were clearly proved, but all the defendants were acquitted; and the grand jury again presented,

- (1) Memoirs of Romilly 3:338.
- (2) Howell's State Trials, 32:752.
- (3) Memoirs of Romilly, 3:338, 339.
- (4) Parl. Deb. 38:298-300.

as a matter dangerous to the community, the interposition of the executive government between master and slave. The court, however, refused to receive this presentment, and it was withdrawn. (1)

Slaves were quite frequently sent to the public chain for private offences of which their masters might think them guilty. The Governor, Mr. Maxwell, wished to remit the punishment of some of these slaves but was told that he had no authority. Whereupon, he consulted Mr. Glanville, the Attorney-General of the island; who gave it as his opinion that, although the Governor might by Royal prerogative pardon slaves, who had been judicially condemned to this punishment, yet he had no power whatever to release any slave, who had been sentenced by the sole will of his master. (2)

There was also a law passed which imposed a restriction and a heavy tax on the manumission of slaves, and another law which declared that no person of color, who landed in the island should be considered as free, unless he produced a certificate of his freedom and paid a duty. "A slave," said Romilly, "no sooner sets his foot on the shores of Great Britain than he becomes free; while in Dominica, when a free negro lands upon their coast, he instantly sinks into a slave and it is only by money that he can redeem himself from that degraded condition." (3)

Another instance of cruelty was the cruel treatment of a slave by a certain Mr. Huggins at Nevis. He had caused 100 lashes, with the usual instrument of punishment, a cartwhip, to be inflicted on two very young boys; and he had been barbarous enough to inflict 20 lashes on the sister and a female cousin of the poor youths, because they had shed tears at witnessing the tortures of the boys. The case was clearly proved on trial, no witness

(1) Memoirs of Romilly, 3:339, 340. Parl. Deb. 38:300.

(2) Memoirs of Romilly, 3:340. Parl. Deb. 38:301.

(3) Memoirs of Romilly, 3:341. Parl. Deb. 38:303.

was called for the defendant, and yet he was acquitted. (1)

In June 1818, Romilly brought the case of another slave, who was killed by punishment to the attention of the House. A certain slave named Congo Jack had run away but was captured and flogged. That night he was chained to another run away slave and the following day set to work without food or drink, still chained to his fellow. Exhausted he sank to the ground but was flogged by two drivers so that he died within a few hours. He was buried without a coroner's inquest although the law of the Island of St. Kitts provided that a coroner should be summoned in case a slave died without medical attention. However, the cruelty had created some stir so that the body was dug up and it was plainly evident that death had been caused by physical violence. Nevertheless, the coroner's jury found that Congo Jack had died "by the visitation of God." But it was found impossible to dispose of the matter in this way and one of the drivers was indicted for murder. In the course of the trial, it was found that the Reverend Henry Rawlins had taken the whip from the drivers and had himself flogged the slave until he sank to the ground. As a result, he was convicted of manslaughter and sentenced to pay a fine of £200 and to submit to three months' imprisonment. (2)

Romilly concluded with a motion for copies of the deposition taken before the Coroner, which was agreed to? The minutes of evidence had been laid before the House previously and printed. The Secretary of State found it extremely difficult to obtain information on this case as the assembly of St. Kitts was inclined to defend Mr. Rawlins of which he and his relatives were members.

- (1) Memoirs of Romilly, 3:341. Parl. Deb. 38:304, 841.
- (2) Memoirs of Romilly, 3:348. Parl. Deb. 38:1201, 1202.

CONCLUSION.

The men, who began the agitation against the slave trade, had in mind two objects. They wanted to suppress this inhuman traffic and by so doing they hoped to ameliorate the condition of the slaves in the English possessions. Our study, however, has shown that up to the year 1823, they had failed in both their objects. The slave trade was carried on as much as ever before and with greater cruelty, and the condition of those negroes already in the islands was not improved. That such was the condition of affairs was not due to inactivity of the British government. No efforts had been spared to secure the suppression of the trade by means of treaties with Foreign powers, so that at this time, the traffic could be carried on legally by Portugal alone. To secure the enforcement of the abolition acts, England tried to obtain a mutual limited right of search. In her endeavors in this direction, she experienced the greatest difficulty but she was successful in several instances. As the condition of the slaves in the British possessions was quite unsatisfactory, pressure was brought on the colonies to induce them to pass laws to improve these conditions. But the laws passed by the colonies, as well as the treaties made by Great Britain with other nations, remained a dead letter. The efforts of thirty--five years, then, as far as actual results were concerned had been unavailing. Indeed, the whole situation was so unsatisfactory, that it was decided to attack the problem in an entirely different manner. Instead of confining their efforts chiefly against the slave trade, the friends of abolition determined to begin a struggle against the institution of slavery itself. In this way they hoped to abolish the slave trade by removing its demand, for with the slaves emancipated,

there would be no object in bringing in fresh supplies. In this part of my thesis, I have endeavored to trace the movement against the slave trade. In the next part I shall trace the history of the movement against slavery.

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